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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

13 February 1980

SUBJECT: Parapsychology Increasing Academic Legitimacy. Evidence of the Increased Legitimacy and Acceptability of the PSI Field in Academia.

1. In the November Issue of OMNI Magazine, is an interview with Cambridge University's first Ph.D. in parapsychology, Dr. Carl Sargent. Of considerable interest is the fact that the interview was conducted by Dr. Christopher Evans, a well-known British skeptic. Some aspects of the interview are significant. Beginning with an editorial comment on page 82, "In a field as controversial as parapsychology, test methods must be tight enough to eliminate any chance of fraud or of misinterpreting results. Few are - which is why it is so significant that Sargent's repeated experiments passed the strict Cambridge examiners." In the experiments, two series gave 45% correct answers. A fourth yielded 44%, and all subjects scored better than chance. The principal method used which yielded such results was the Ganzfeld method, which uses white noise to cause sensory deprivation and focus the mind on internal processes. The repeatability rate Sargent reports (on page 82) is higher with Ganzfeld "than anything in parapsychology - almost 60 percent." On repeatability Sargent states (page 106), after observing that repeatability is important, that "high repeatability is only typical of certain areas of the physical sciences. It's not characteristic of anything but the tiniest areas of human sciences. The only areas of psychology that have high replicability are certain areas of psychophysics and classical conditioning. In both, you are dealing with ludicrously oversimplified environments. You say parapsychology has been in action for fifty years and hasn't achieved much. That may be true. But experimental psychology has been going for about a hundred years, and what has it achieved? Sorry to keep sniping at psychology, but my argument is that the only realistic data base against which to examine the achievements of parapsychology is psychology. Remember the sheer complexity of one's subject matter in both cases....when physics starts playing around with complex systems it soon gets into trouble."

2. Noted in the S-1 Press clipping of 8 January 1980, is that the Nobel Prize winner Brian Josephson, of the Josephson-effect computer fame, is leaving physics to study parapsychology. This is the same Josephson who endorsed the Icelandic (parapsychology) papers. He is, of course, not really leaving physics but entering the new field of consciousness/physics which includes portions of parapsychology. ~~Dr. Jack Sarfatti of the Physics/Consciousness Research Group in California met Josephson, a Cambridge student, at the Association for Psychical Research Symposium headed by Mr. Bernard Carr of the Institute for Theoretical Astronomy at Cambridge. It is intriguing that other Nobel laureates such as Richard P. Feynman, T. D. Lee, and Munnay Gell-Mann are interested in this new field. It may and probably will eventually contain the main thrust for future physics.* It has great promises and some awful possibilities. The occult power-hungry orientation of some of the groups reminds us too much of the Nazi horror. We ought not make the same mistake that we did with the Nazi's.~~

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Just because someone is making insane use of principles and mixes truth with nonsense, does not mean that the principles are incorrect or without power to affect history.

3. It should be noted from a sociological point of view that in Western Society during the 60's and 70's, the acceptance level concerning PSI among large segments of the population rose significantly. Willingness to use such power also rose dramatically. These twin surges are evidenced by:

a. The rise in the number of popular publications about PSI.

b. The number of new power oriented cults which arose (Silva mind control, Covens, Satanists, Jonestown, etc.)

c. The number and impact of new motion pictures containing PSI material.

d. The fact that all major Chirstian denominations representing over 1 billion people have endorsed the view that the gifts of the Holy Spirit (many of which are PSI powers**) are for the average Christian to use. Over 30 million persons of various denominations have been trained in their use.

e. The Hasidic movement within Judaism indicates the use of such powers. Certain aspects of Hasidism are enjoying a renaissance.

f. Studies of peak experience by Dr. Andrew Greely have shown that as much as 30% of the U.S. population has had transcendent experiences.

* NOTE: We find substantial support for these positions in the Gifford lectures of Werner Heisenberg, the Erangs Conference (1946) paper of physicist Friedrich Dessauer, in an article by the mathematician, Kurt Godel, entitled "Russel's Mathematical Logic", and finally in the 1929 Swarthmore lectures of Arthur Stanley Eddington.

** See the works of Pierre Teilhand de Chardin and Dr. Morton Kelsey of Notre Dame for a more complete treatment.

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